DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 430 296 EA 029 819

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TITLE Leadership Development: A Meaning-Making Art.
PUB DATE 1999-04-00
NOTE 46p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (Montreal, Quebec, Canada, April 19-23, 1999).
PUB TYPE Reports - Evaluative (142) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Institutes (Training Programs); Leadership; Leadership Qualities; *Leadership Training; Program Effectiveness; Training Methods
IDENTIFIERS Retreats

ABSTRACT

This paper describes a retreat, "Leadership without Easy Answers," which was held for leaders in the arts community. It examines whether the retreat had a positive impact on the leadership work of the participants, and it discusses ways that the retreat influenced leadership development in arts advocacy. Attending the retreat were three-person teams representing the states of Colorado, Montana, Nebraska, and Wyoming. Each participant held a statewide leadership role in the arts in his or her respective state. The retreat was designed to model the theory of leadership development, giving persons an experience of one approach to leadership while at the same time honoring who they were and what they believed. The program was comprised of four sessions. The opening session focused on six different definitions of leadership. Session 2 was spent examining a hypothetical case study in which a rural community struggles with various problems. The third session explored various aspects of leadership, and the last session looked at the nature of change and the difficulties inherent in change. The retreat's impact on the participants was mostly positive. They believed that their time together had been useful and that they would be able to apply what they had learned. (RJM)

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L. Lyman

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# Leadership Development

## A Meaning-Making Art

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American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting

April 19-23, 1999

Montreal, Canada

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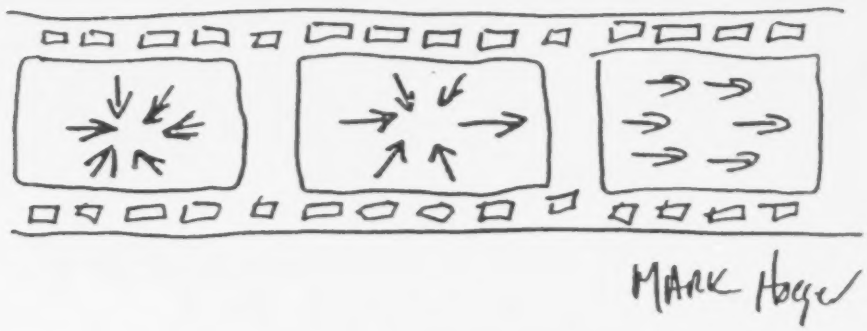
LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT:
A MEANING-MAKING ART




As represented in this film image of leadership created at the end, we met, held conversations, and dialogued in many-sized circles during the "Leadership Without Easy Answers" weekend retreat sponsored by *Prairie Visions: The National Center for Leadership and Collaborative Practice in DBAE.* The retreat had a designated leader, but in fact we all facilitated the development of each other's leadership. Then we left, moving out of the picture, returning to the larger circles of our individual lives, having for that moment in time acted out this definition of leadership: *Leading happens within communities when the meaning of our common enterprise emerges with greater clarity and when persons are stimulated and encouraged by each other to grow toward greater wholeness.*

The "Leadership Without Easy Answers" retreat was held November 15-17, 1996, at Mahoney State Park in Nebraska. The retreat was facilitated by Linda L. Lyman, Ph.D., an Associate Professor of Education at Bradley University, Peoria, Illinois, formerly Administrative Assistant for Prairie Visions. The Prairie Visions Consortium for Discipline-Based Art Education is sponsored by the Getty Center for Education in the Arts (an operating program of the J. Paul Getty Trust), the Nebraska Department of Education, and several partner organizations and foundations. Prairie Visions Director is Sheila N. Brown, Ph.D., Fine Arts Consultant for the Nebraska Department of Education. The purpose of this paper is to report on the retreat, consider evidence that the retreat had

a positive impact on the leadership work of the participants, and offer reflections on the implications of the retreat for leadership development for arts' advocacy.

## Part One - The Retreat Experience

Attending the retreat were three-person teams from the states of Colorado, Montana, and Wyoming. Each state had previously sent delegates to the summer Prairie Visions Institute and the retreat was a follow-up activity provided by *Prairie Visions: The National Center for Leadership and Collaborative Practice in DBAE.* The persons on these teams hold statewide leadership roles in the arts in their respective states. Two members of the Colorado team had been among the originators of "ARTSOURCE COLORADO, A Center for the Advancement of Art in Education." The third person was from the Colorado Department of Education, and is also a member of the ARTSOURCE leadership team. The Wyoming team included three members of their state-wide steering committee for "High Plains - DBAE," an art teacher, a museum representative, and an art supervisor from the only K-12 district in the state to have DBAE. The Montana team also included three members. These persons represent different groups advocating for enhanced arts education in the state: a university arts educator, a museum curator of education, and an art specialist who is the new president of the Montana Art Educators Association. The 25 participants also included 15 persons representing Nebraska's Prairie Visions leadership team and one person active in theater arts in Nebraska. Nebraska participants represented all the groups that are part of the Prairie Visions Consortium and included: public school art specialists, two principals, a classroom teacher, two museum representatives, university arts educators, artists, an art historian, a representative from the Omaha Theater Company for Children, Dr. Brown, and Prairie Visions Administrative Assistant Margaret Proskovec from the Nebraska Department of Education. A complete list of the participants and their leadership roles is included in the Appendix. The retreat was designed to address leadership issues faced by the participants from Colorado, Montana, and Wyoming, these issues having been identified in preliminary conversations with the retreat facilitator. The

retreat also provided an opportunity for continuing networking among leaders from the invited states and leaders from the Nebraska Prairie Visions Consortium. The retreat was organized in four three-hour sessions, taking place from Friday evening through Sunday morning.

## Retreat Overview and Leadership Theories

### Session One

Session One, held after a get-acquainted dinner Friday evening, featured a conversation activity focused on six different definitions of leadership (Campbell, 1988; Senge, 1990; Wheatley, 1992; Drath & Palus, 1994; Heifetz, 1994; and Bolman & Deal, 1995). Preceding the conversation, at the beginning of the session, each participant was asked to write a definition of leadership. The conversation activity happened in three stages, beginning with each participant receiving one of six definitions of leadership and asked to make a few notes in response. Following this time of silent reflection, participants met in small groups with the four or five others who had received the same quotation and compared reactions. Small groups also discussed the implications of their respective quotations for leadership and arts' advocacy. Finally, the whole group held a discussion about leadership and arts' advocacy with sharing by each group leading into general discussion. The purpose of the opening session was to have participants consider a variety of definitions and approaches to leadership. Quotations used in this opening activity are included in the Appendix.

The first evening ended with a video presentation based on Margaret Wheatley's (1992) reflections on implications of the new science for leadership. The ideas in Wheatley's book grow out of her creatively juxtaposed reflections about new scientific knowledge as well as her interest in why organizations aren't working well. She sees the need for organizations to move away from a seventeenth century mechanistic Newtonian world view toward the models of the twentieth century: the science of chaos, evolutionary biology, quantum mechanics, and field theory. Among her conclusions are that *chaos* is

critical to renewal and a part of the natural process of renewal in organizations as well as in natural systems. Making an analogy from evolutionary biology she suggests that *information* is the primary organizing force of the universe and that new information is the source of all change. From quantum mechanics comes the observation that even particles exist in relationship to something else. With threads of interconnection everywhere, ***relationships*** become a primary reality of organizations and the diversity of relationships can further energize our organizations. Finally, Wheatley identifies *vision* as an organizational field rather than some future imagined ideal state, calling on us to embrace vision as an invisible field that can help us recreate our organizations and our world. The final statement of the video uses these words attributed to Einstein: "No problem can be solved from the same consciousness that created it. We must learn to see the world anew."

Session Two

Session Two, Saturday morning, featured the four reframing perspectives of Bolman and Deal (1991) applied to a messy scenario about a community called Visionville, a hypothetical community struggling with a variety of arts education and advocacy issues. In this verbal sketch of a rural community trying to start a local arts council are embedded structural, human resource, political, and cultural problems. See the Appendix for the Visionville scenario. Through learning about and working with these reframing perspectives participants were learning "to see the world anew," to analyze problems of leadership and arts' advocacy with different lenses. Bolman and Deal's work consolidates the major schools of organizational thought into four perspectives: structural, human resource, political, and cultural. Because any leadership challenge or issue can be analyzed from each perspective, reframing -- or looking at the challenge or issue from each of the four perspectives -- is a habit of mind that can be learned and practiced. Basic information about the four frames having been presented and the Visionville example used for practice with analysis, participants worked in four small groups to write their own scenarios, including the challenges and issues with which they were struggling in their respective

communities and states. Following the group writing sessions, participants traded scenarios, and analyzed the problems and proposed solutions from different reframing perspectives.

One scenario was called "Shake Up at Shaker Heights Museum of Art." The hypothetical messy situation resulted from involving Mr. Rolling Thunder, a Native American shaman, as an advisor on the Museum Board. He wanted the museum to educate people to his belief that all art needs to serve a practical functional purpose. After a structural analysis of the interrelationships among the various concerned parties the group recommended a human resource solution, a facilitator to help the group harmonize their conflicting perspectives. Another scenario was about how Megapolis, the largest city in the state of Nirvana, had received several grants from a wealthy funder of arts education. However, when a representative from the state educational structure devised a whole state plan that was funded by the same wealthy funder, to the exclusion of Megapolis, then a rift developed between Megapolis and the rest of the state, leaving each to follow its own path. Working from the human resource and structural perspectives participants generated problems and solutions. The third scenario took place in Anat-nom, a sparsely populated western state. This messy situation occurred as a leadership transition was taking place for the Anat-nom Art Education Association and centered on a meeting where the President, Past-President, and President-Elect would be coming together with the former board and the new board. The organization had been mostly talk and no action for the past two years, and many resentments were buried beneath the surface. Participants analyzed the problems and solutions from the human resource and political frames. Finally, the fourth scenario also took place in a mythical state where a state Goals 2000 committee has been established to advance the quality of education. The committee is dominated by business leaders concerned with creation of a work force capable of meeting their future labor needs. The fastest growing business is a computer software company specializing in writing programs for the Internet. The state Alliance for Arts Education wants arts education included in the

state's Goals 2000 goals but there are no arts representatives on the committee. Participants analyzed the situation in terms of political and human resource problems, developing solutions from these perspectives also. These scenarios taken as a group represent a range of typical leadership challenges for arts' advocates at the state level: understanding and incorporating cultural diversity, working with differing beliefs about the value of art, resolving conflicts over funding and other resources, communication issues, power issues, and creating structures that promote collaboration and best serve the purposes of arts' advocacy.

Session Three

Session Three began with an open discussion of Heifetz's (1994) Leadership Without Easy Answers , the book having been received in advance of the retreat by participants. At least half of the participants had already read the entire book. Following the general discussion, attention focused on the definition of leading as an activity engaged in by persons both with and without authority. Leaders, according to Heifetz, engage in the activity of helping persons make progress on adaptive challenges with leadership characterized as the mobilization of adaptive work. Emphasis was on how to distinguish between technical and adaptive challenges. The key differentiating question that must be asked is: "Does making progress on this problem require changes in people's values, attitudes, or habits of behavior?" (Heifetz, 1994, p. 87). If the answer is "yes," then the challenge for leadership is not to find an "authoritative" solution, but rather how to mobilize persons to do that adaptive work. A leader must raise conflicts to the surface and ask the difficult questions. Questions and conflict may create the kind of chaos that Wheatley (1992) finds a necessary step in organizational change. Because change is difficult, persons will resist doing adaptive work by engaging in what Heifetz calls work avoidance. Work avoidance patterns include the following: holding on the past assumptions; blaming authority, scapegoating, or some other form of externalizing the enemy; denying the problem; jumping to conclusions; finding a distracting issue and shifting the focus to it;

following standard operating procedures even when they don't or aren't working; taking a subject of discussion off the table at a meeting, or some other action that suddenly makes everyone feel good; sudden dropping of the level of stress associated with an issue; being content to watch the gladiators fight and choosing not to be involved; and asking authorities to solve the problem. These patterns of work avoidance and how to create a holding environment that will facilitate adaptive work were highlighted, as well as the ending sentence in the Heifetz book, "One may lead perhaps with no more than a question in hand" (p. 276). The afternoon ended with Colorado, Montana and Wyoming participants in state groups, and with Nebraska participants working in topical groups (administration, technology, and school issues), to brainstorm lists of major adaptive challenges currently faced. The evening dinner was informal, followed by reports from the three visiting state groups on what they had accomplished since the 1996 Prairie Visions Institute.

Session Four

Session Four on Sunday began with a conversation activity focused on quotations about change (Senge, 1990; Bolman & Deal, 1991; Wheatley, 1992; Fullan, 1993; Heifetz, 1994; and Sarason, 1996) that are included in the Appendix. The activity was structured like the conversation about leadership with which the retreat opened. The quotations led into an in-depth discussion of the difficulty of accomplishing change in a school setting. The quotations highlighted the following ideas: change from the four reframing perspectives, change and polar opposites, change as a spiral, the crisis theory of change, the problem of power, and the idea that adaptive problems require educative strategies. Following this opening discussion, participants gathered in their Saturday afternoon groups to identify the top priorities from their previously brainstormed lists of adaptive challenges. Each group also created plans to address those challenges, considering solutions from the four reframing perspectives.

Next, the participants reviewed Fullan's (1993) eight lessons for change. To conclude the workshop six themes of caring leadership were presented and the importance

of caring leadership to collaboration and learning were highlighted. These themes of caring leadership were: (a) A caring leader treats every person equally and with respect; (b) A caring leader does not limit her/himself, or anyone else, by or to a role; (c) A caring leader supports and encourages others as persons and professionals; (d) A caring leader listens and solves problems; (e) A caring leader's use of time reveals her/his priorities; and (f) A caring leader keeps the mission focused and central (Lyman, 1996). Participants were invited to rewrite their opening definitions of leadership, share any changes in their thinking about leadership, and complete a formal retreat evaluation.

Part Two - Impact of the Retreat

The impact of the retreat can be considered in terms of changes in participants' cognitive understanding of leadership as well as their subsequent leadership behaviors. Analysis of the differences in definitions of leadership from the beginning to the end of the retreat provides insight into changes in cognitive understanding. In terms of behavior, the end-of-retreat evaluations suggested a high level of enthusiasm for the potential usefulness of the retreat. For the 18 persons completing the retreat evaluation, with 1 being "Disagree" and 5 being "Agree," the mean of the ratings for the item "I will be able to use what I learned in this retreat," was 4.83. For the one other item related to usefulness, "Overall, this retreat was worthwhile," the mean of the ratings was 4.88. A Follow-Up Questionnaire was sent in mid-May, 1997, to gather feedback about the actual usefulness of the retreat from the participants' perspectives six months later. Written Follow-Up Questionnaire responses were received from 11 persons, with feedback from an additional 10 persons gathered through phone interviews. These results provide insight into the impact of the retreat. A summary of how the plans made at the retreat have been implemented, also gathered through the Follow-Up Questionnaire, provides insight into whether the retreat has had an impact on the participants' leadership behaviors. The third section of the Follow-up Questionnaire directly addressed the question of the over-all impact of the retreat, asking participants to "Please comment on to what extent the retreat as

a whole has continued to be helpful to you in understanding and carrying out your responsibilities for leadership in the arts." This information is also relevant to understanding whether the retreat has had an impact on the participants' leadership behaviors.

Cognitive Understanding of Leadership

We are all influenced by definitions of leadership that exist in our culture. Leaders are considered by many to be the larger-than-life heroes who accomplish something significant, legendary or new. In Senge's (1990) words,

> Our traditional views of leaders -- as special people who set the direction, make the key decisions, and energize the troops -- are deeply rooted in an individualistic and nonsystemic world view. Especially in the West, leaders are heroes -- great men (and occasionally women) who 'rise to the fore' in times of crises. Our prevailing leadership myths are still captured by the image of the captain of the cavalry leading the charge to rescue the settlers from the attacking Indians. (p. 340)

Historically, leadership has been considered "a social-influence process in which individuals get others to engage in activity or work" (Drath & Palus, 1994, p. 13). As Drath and Palus explain, we "have not replaced the dominance construct with the influence construct. We have more likely supplemented dominance with influence. Influence as a way of understanding leadership is layered over dominance as a way of understanding leadership. . . . More recently, a new layer, a new way of understanding leadership has been added: *participative leadership*, it might be termed" (p. 24). Participative leadership has also been referred to as empowering leadership and is a key idea to transformational leadership theory (Bennis & Nanus, 1985). All of these cultural influences -- leadership as dominance, influence, and empowerment or participation -- were reflected in the definitions of leadership written by retreat participants during the Friday evening opening session.

Although retreat participants began and ended the retreat by writing definitions of leadership, the directions for writing these definitions differed. On Friday participants

were simply asked to write a definition of *leadership*. On Sunday directions were given "to write a definition of *leading* that incorporates tension and includes an image." These differences in the directions were deliberate, the retreat having been designed to loosen, if not actually change, participants' cognitive understanding of leadership, changing focus from *leadership as an abstraction* to *leading as an activity*. Both the first and second definitions were collected from 20 of the 25 participants. Pairs do not exist for the other participants because of variations in arrival and departure times.

Initial Definitions of Leadership

The Friday night definitions fall into several predictable clusters. No one defined leadership entirely in terms of dominance, although several of the definitions echoed that language. For example, "Leadership is taking charge of a particular group for the purpose of meeting some goal which generally deals with challenging situations," one definition began. Ten of Friday's definitions either explicitly or implicitly suggested that leadership is about influence. A total of four actually used the word influence. For example, "Leaders are persons who influence the actions, motivations, and interactions of others. They are willing to exercise initiative to help effect change." Another explicit example was, "Leadership is the ability of an individual to influence others to adopt his or her vision, and by doing so, to change others' behavior to support that vision." An example of a definition that by implication is about influence began, "Leadership is the ability to transform ways of doing thinking, being - in another individual, group, society." Still another implicit example read, "Leadership is the ability to move others forward."

Finally, a few definitions focused on leadership as empowerment or participation. For example, one definition was that "Leadership is involving others in a process and then getting out of their way." Actually using the word *empower* was another example, "Leadership is a role which exchanges the responsibilities of facilitating and managing in order to provide a structure that empowers and inspires others to think and act and grow." A third example used the word collaboration: "Leadership involves working together as a

group, sharing ideas and solving problems. This collaborative effort respects all participants, encourages creativity and results in a caring atmosphere. Problems are solved in this atmosphere, changes are made and the group benefits when led in such a manner." A final example added vision, a popular concept, to the language of participation: "The ability to get others to identify needs for change, explore options, manage team efforts in discovering most appropriate solutions that are flexible yet address long term issues and visions." At least two of the Friday definitions utilized images, one being the continuous non-verbal image reproduced on the front and back covers of this monograph. As originally drawn by Dr. Connie Landis, University of Montana professor, the image overlapped both sides of a 4 by 6 index card. Another powerful unique image of leadership was verbal: "The willingness to take responsibility for the future. It comes not when the play is written but when the play is produced. A leader turns ideas into reality."

Focusing on community building, one of the definitions written Friday night anticipated Palus and Drath's (1994) suggestion that leadership be thought of as *meaning-making in a community of practice*. A participant wrote, "Leadership is when a decision needs to be made, either one person, or a group of people gather a community together and work through a problem toward a solution. Identifying a problem, finding a solution, and bringing the solution to finality." Drath and Palus (1994) explain the phrase 'community of practice' to mean "people united in a common enterprise who share a history and thus certain values, beliefs, way of talking and ways of doing things" (p. 4). Drath and Palus (1994) offer for consideration a redefinition of leadership as "a social meaning-making process that takes place as a result of activity or work in a group" (p. 13). Such a perspective is a significant shift from the idea that leadership is a result of the actions of a dominant and influential individual, and implies a shift in how the role of the individual in leadership is viewed. "This is a shift away from understanding leadership as being about what a leader does to understand it as being something people do together" (Drath & Palus, 1994, p. 15). Drath and Palus (1994) restate their definition in these words, "Whenever

people are doing something together for any period of time extended enough to form a community, we can usefully think of the striving to make things make sense, to create meaning out of that experience, as the process of leadership -- however that process plays out and with whatever participation by various individuals" (p. 25). While significantly different from the idea of leadership as dominance with influence, the idea also represents an evolution of the idea of empowerment or participative leadership. The retreat was structured to provide participants with such an experience of leadership. Some level of cognitive chaos was deliberately stirred up by looking at a variety of conflicting definitions of leadership. From that introductory chaos followed an experience of meaning-making in a community of practice as definitions of leadership were reconstructed throughout the retreat. The journey began with the facilitator's emphasis on new ways of thinking about the meaning of leadership and ended with the emphasis on planning for adaptive change within state or "community" groups so that the meaning-making would continue. Heifetz's definition of leadership as the activity of adaptive work by persons both with and without authority, coupled with Drath and Palus's meaning-making, and supported by Wheatley's insistence on the value of chaos, represent a potentially powerful new approach to leadership development as the art of giving persons an experience of meaning-making. This approach seems uniquely suited to those who are leaders in the arts. Chaos is a step in the creative process and the arts are about meaning, and created and valued within community. One major adaptive challenge for leadership in the arts is to extend appreciation of the creative process and the meaning of art in our lives by enlarging the community of its advocates.

Concluding Definitions of Leadership

Definitions of leading/leadership written at the end of the retreat indicate that ideas about leadership had been impacted by the retreat experience. Every person's definition was changed in some way. Whereas the primary cluster of definitions from Friday night were in the leadership as "influence" category, by the end of the retreat the largest group of

definitions explicitly or implicitly clustered around collaboration and meaning-making -- featuring the importance of valuing the question, journeying together, and meaning making and/or community. An example of such a definition is the following:

> Leading is first an awareness of one's own passion and "bliss."
> It's having a sense of purpose but also understanding one's time, place and situation.
> AND FORMING A QUESTION.
>
> Leading is the ability to observe what's going on, listen to people, assess situations, reflect and respond.
> AND THEN ASK A QUESTION.
>
> Leading is relationship building;
> THEN ASKING A QUESTION.
>
> Leading is sensitivity to tension and having the intuition and the skills to know what to do with that,
> AND THEN ASKING A QUESTION
>
> Leading is moving/journeying along together,
> WHILE ASKING QUESTIONS.

Another example of these intertwined themes is the following: "Leading is taking action. Leading is bringing people together in meaningful ways so that they gain power from the group. As a result of this power they will individually and in groups be able to achieve more than they were able to previously, before they were brought together. The tension involves overcoming work avoidance mechanisms to bring people together in the first place." Additionally, definitions revealed an increased realization of the complexity of leading. There were also greater numbers of absolutely unique definitions, possibly as a result of the direction to incorporate a tension and an image or possibly because participants felt free to be creative in defining leadership. Several of these unique visual image definitions are reproduced in Figures 1-4.

Figure 1

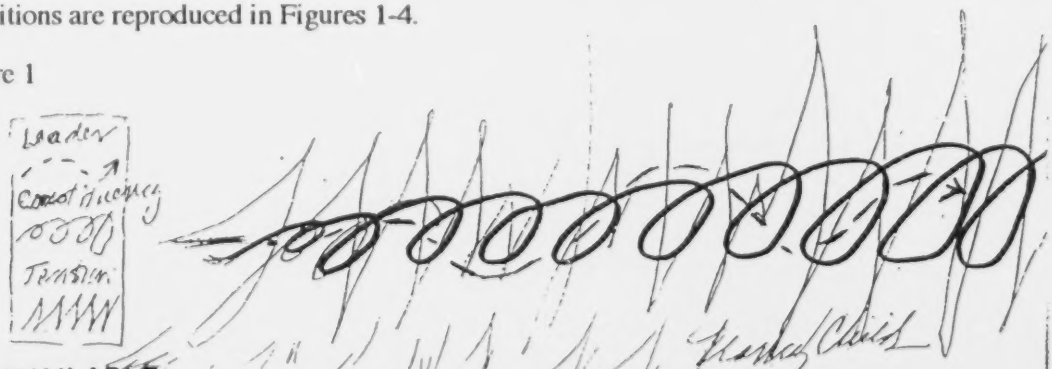



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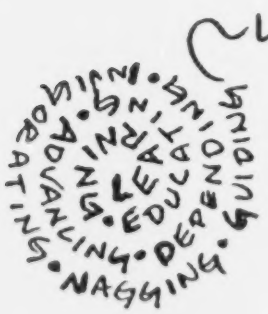
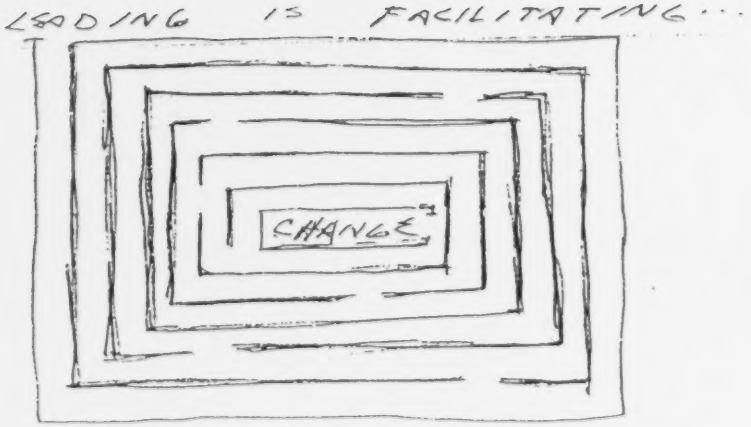
Figure 2

Figure 3




- Shelley Howard
Dist. Vis. Arts Coord.
Cherry Creek Schools
Colorado

Figure 4



According to Bolman and Deal (1991), "The English word *leader* is more than a thousand years old, little changed from its Anglo-Saxon root *laedare*, which meant to lead people on a journey" (p. 404). It was the intent of the retreat facilitator to provide a meaning-making journey experience, albeit a cognitive one, that people would carry home with them and continue in their own ways within their own communities. On Sunday morning one participant defined leadership as a journey both in words and an image. The words were: "I walk my students symbolically to the edge -- not in front breaking trail -- nor pushing a resisting obstacle, but side-by-side. We break path never traveled as a team before -- uncertainty and at the same time anticipation move us towards our 'unknown' goal. Perhaps the most difficult is the point when we come to the 'edge' and decide to dance the 'leap of faith' so we can continue forward on our journey to new levels." The accompanying image is shared in Figure 5.

Figure 5

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## Leadership Behaviors

Whether or not the theory presented at the retreat has impacted the behaviors of participants as they have continued their individual leadership journeys is of considerable interest. Several types of evidence gathered from the Follow-Up Questionnaire will be considered: rankings of the leadership theory presented in terms of usefulness, reports about implementation of the plans made at the retreat on Sunday morning, and comments about the over-all impact of the retreat. A copy of the Follow-Up Questionnaire and accompanying cover letter are included in the Appendix.

### Usefulness of Leadership Theory.

The Follow-Up Questionnaires were sent to the 25 persons who participated in the retreat. Responses were received from 21 persons. Part I of the Follow-Up Questionnaire asked participants to "Please indicate to what extent the theoretical presentations made at the retreat have continued to be useful to you as you carry out your responsibilities for leadership in the arts." Choices were: Totally Useful (4), Greatly Useful (3), Somewhat Useful (2), and Not-at-all Useful (1). The mean rankings for each were as follows:

| Mean | Item |
|---|---|
| 2.98 | A. "Leadership Definitions" Conversation Activity |
| 2.85 | B. Video on Margaret Wheatley's "Leadership and the New Science" |
| 3.48 | C. Reframing Perspectives of Bolman and Deal (structural, human resource, political, and cultural) |
| 3.48 | D. Leadership mobilizes persons to address adaptive challenges (Heifetz) |
| 3.07 | E. Work Avoidance Patterns (Heifetz) |
| 3.06 | F. "Change Quotations" Conversation Activity |
| 2.97 | G. Caring Leadership Themes |

These rankings suggest that the reframing perspectives (Bolman & Deal, 1991) and Heifetz's (1994) conceptualization of leadership are proving to be the most useful to the participants six months after the retreat.

Implementation of Retreat Planning.

Participants spent a large portion of the final retreat session Sunday morning identifying major adaptive challenges and making plans to address those issues. Colorado identified its major adaptive challenges for COLORADO ARTSOURCE to be: organizational structure, funding, outreach, and partnerships. The group developed plans to work on each component. Montana identified better communication throughout the state as its major adaptive challenge. Wyoming wanted to build a stronger steering committee that would be diverse and committed to developing a plan for holding a Prairie Visions type DBAE workshop within the next year. Participants from Nebraska divided into the following three groups for this segment of the workshop: Technology, School Issues, and Administration. The major challenge identified by the Technology group was how to reduce the gap between what teachers know and what students know about technology. Each member of the School Issues grouped identified an adaptive challenge from his or her own school setting. These included: promotion of arts in the school and community; impact district with need and importance of the arts in the students' life-learning skills and expressions; help teachers/students/parents become aware of the presence and importance of art in their lives; infuse DBAE into a whole school; create a greater awareness of art and its value; and personally affecting the challenge of budget cuts on public school art. For the Administratration group the challenge identified was to sponsor a series of conferences for administrators, students, and community members from school districts at museums sites so that administrators and students could have a meaningful experience of appreciating art together.

Part II of the Follow-Up Questionnaire gathered information about which of the plans made at the retreat have been implemented. Part III gathered comments about the over-all impact of the retreat. Results from both of these sections of the questionairre will be presented state by state.

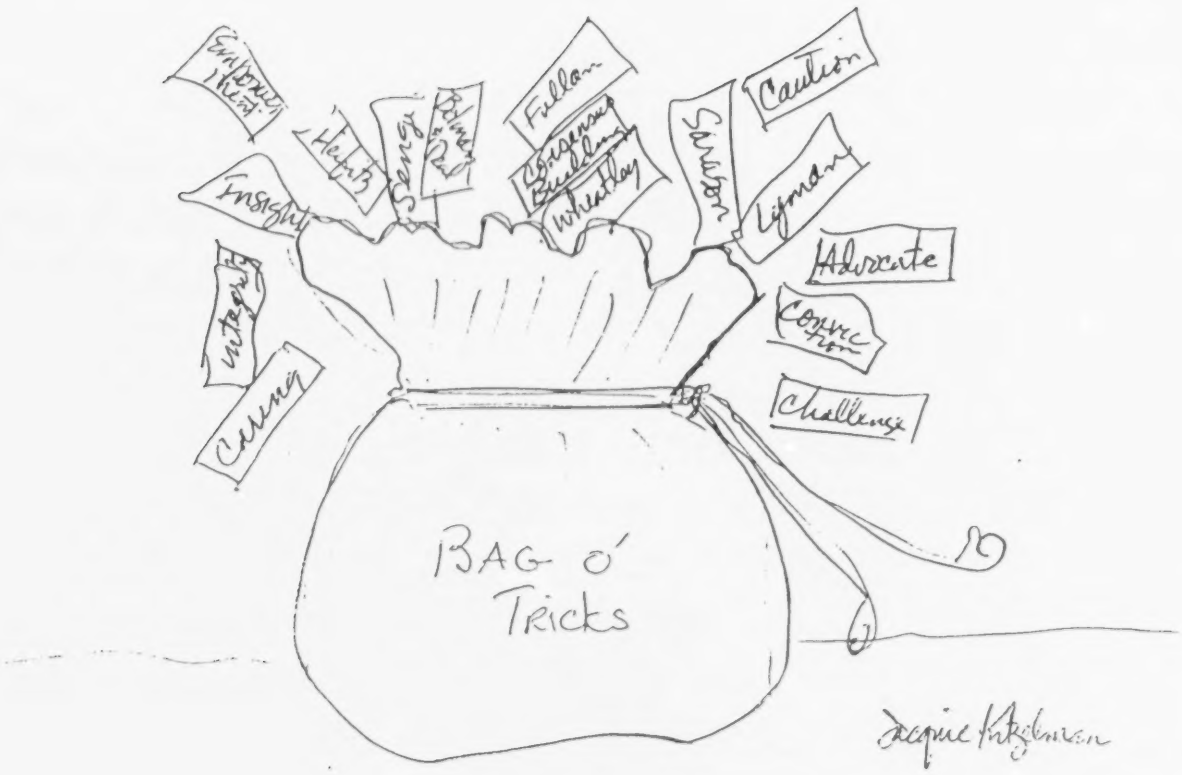
Colorado. Collaboration to evolve a new vision for art education in Colorado began as a concept in 1994 as a result of regional meetings of state art leaders from Colorado, Nebraska, Wyoming, Kansas, Montana and South Dakota. A committee of four was formed by Richard Munson, Chair of the Department of Visual Arts at the University of Northern Colorado, to explore the possibility of establishing an art education institute that would be uniquely Colorado. This committee included Shelley Howard, visual arts coordinator from Cherry Creek, and two others. Having already held a leadership institute/retreat with 12 persons in July, 1996, at the Anderson Ranch Art Center, what had been the "Colorado Art Education Institute" has renamed itself "ARTSOURCE COLORADO, A Center for the Advancement of Art in Education." Additionally, the group has completed a mission statement, formulated beliefs and goals, and established task forces to address specific issues such as the planning for the leadership institute to be held June 15-21, 1997. Consequently, retreat participants Munson, Howard, and Jacquie Kitzelman, Colorado Department of Education, approached the "Leadership Without Easy Answers" retreat with a great deal of focus. The Colorado team came to the Nebraska retreat looking for different ways to facilitate leadership, as well strategies for teaching adaptability and working with diversity. A primary concern was the issue of transferability, how could they ensure that participants in their institute would be able to transfer institute concepts and processes to their home communities.

Team planning identified major adaptive challenges in the areas of funding, outreach, partnerships, and organizational structure. In response to the Follow-Up Questionnaire, Munson reported, "We are now a 'fully formed' entity with partners, funding, programs, and outreach." Responses from Howard and Kitzelman filled in a few details. A grant was received from the Colorado Art Education Association, and a Goals 2000 grant application for three years of funding has been completed. Additionally, the Tointon Institute for Educational Change has pledged ongoing support. Members of the leadership team are already bringing about change in their local communities through

workshops. A presentation was made at the National Art Education Association conference in March, and institute plans for 1997 are complete. Twelve participants have been selected for the 1997 institute and growth plans call for an additional 12 to 24 new participants annually, up to a total of 48 participants each year, with about half of those involved in advanced leadership training and facilitation work. Participants will represent all grade levels, public and private schools, geographical regions, museums, administrators, and community representatives. A formal communication model and leadership structure are still evolving. These will be the focus of the leadership team's work in July and August, 1997, following the institute.

Plans made at the retreat were a refining of activities already in progress. The extent of the continuing progress of this committed and focused group is a measure of their dedication and probably not a result of the retreat, although each did comment positively on the overall impact of the retreat. Munson said, "The workshop has been very useful for us as we address the issues, planning and implementation of our state institute: ARTSOURCE COLORADO." Howard stated that "one of the most beneficial things about this retreat was the way Linda modeled leadership and structured the curriculum." Commenting generally, she said, "Some of the things will be used later, but I remember parts of the retreat in every leadership scenario. The reframing perspectives I use and remember while dealing with other leaders, very frequently. It has helped me understand other people's styles even when I disagree with their tactics." Kitzelman commented, "The retreat reassured me that, although I am not the entrepreneur, I am a leader and am capable of making decisions, keeping focused and motivating people to assume and complete responsibilities. This has proven true in my job, my Chairmanship of Colorado's Alliance for Arts Education and as a participant in the ARTSOURCE leadership team. Thank you." In writing a definition of leadership at the end of the retreat, Kitzelman also interestingly imaged many retreat concepts and activities as a "Bag o' Tricks" reproduced as Figure 6.

Figure 6




Wyoming. The official Wyoming connection with Prairie Visions began in June, 1996. The process of drawing from projects in other states to create something special for Wyoming has been slow, according to Norine Samuelson's comments at the retreat after the Saturday evening dinner. However, she stated that she believed Wyoming could support a program like Prairie Visions and that "the schools are asking for it." Attending the "Leadership Without Easy Answers" retreat were Samuelson, District Art Coordinator, Laramie County District #1, Mark Vinich, an elementary school-based art specialist, and Jane Lavino, Curator of Education for the National Museum of Wildlife Art. Persons who attended the 1996 Prairie Visions Institute created a Wyoming Steering Committee and put together a plan, tentatively called "High Plains - DBAE," with goals for community



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building, holding a Prairie Visions type workshop within the year, and developing a team that could offer inservice training in school districts. However, for a variety of reasons two of the persons attending the "Leadership Without Easy Answers" retreat were newly involved with the project. These same three persons will be attending the Prairie Visions Institute in June, 1997. For this Wyoming group the Nebraska retreat setting provided an ideal opportunity to get to know each other and do additional state planning. Major obstacles to be overcome in Wyoming are those of time and distance plus a small population, according to Samuelson. Communication issues, identifying persons who might want to become involved, and expanding the steering committee are continuing issues for the state.

The major adaptive challenge identified by the group was to "develop a strong steering committee that is diverse and that is committed to the project. Each person will need to realign some present priorities to commit the necessary time." Plans included being in contact with other Steering Committee members in December, which happened via the telephone, although no Steering Committee meeting was held. Lavino reports rearranging her priorities to be able to attend the 1997 Prairie Visions Institute. High Plains - DBAE has been funded by the Wyoming Alliance for Arts Education and has their full support. A one credit class will be offered in August to introduce interested persons to DBAE. The committee is hoping to recruit others for the Steering Committee from the persons attending this class. A continuing problem in the state is mailings not reaching persons who need to be reached with information.

Starting from a completely difference place than the Colorado team, the Wyoming group has made some progress and each respondent commented positively on the impact of the retreat, even though the major adaptive challenge identified is still not accomplished. For Vinich the retreat was also his introduction to DBAE, so he was absorbing a lot. He'd come not knowing what to expect and found the retreat fascinating. He particularly liked the ideas about caring leadership, saying "Too many times people are just cold and want

what they want." Samuelson too was impacted by the ideas about caring, saying that "it was such an eye-opener, that leadership needs to be a caring process and I found the conference really made me aware of that." Lavino also credited the retreat with the following: "(1) It has connected me with other people in my state and in neighboring states. (2) It has made me aware of the need for leadership and given me a desire to contribute as a leader."

Montana. Montana is a state that also faces communication issues complicated by a small population, time and distance. Hopes for the Nebraska retreat, from the perspective of Rebecca Davis, Curator of Education at the Yellowstone Art Center in Billings, were that they could re-do the state plan, become a team, learn more about adaptive work, and learn how to keep focused on the big picture issues. The state plan called for a variety of community building steps, determining the kind of program that would most effectively meet teachers needs and interests for improving arts education in the schools, forming a Teacher Advisory Group at Yellowstone Art Center to begin to determine how a teacher institute might be designed to address their needs, and projected curriculum work. The need to re-do the plan exists because, as in Wyoming, relative to the team who attended the 1996 Prairie Visions Institute, a new group of arts education advocates is coming together in Montana. Part of the challenge of continuing progress will be to create a harmonious working relationship between the newcomers and the oldtimers. Already happening in Montana are a variety of significant arts education events, such as the Genesis Conference sponsored by the Creative Pulse of the University of Montana, the completed production of the Frameworks for Aesthetic Literacy curriculum units, and a variety of Art Teacher Institutes. In addition to Davis, the two persons at the retreat were Dr. Connie Landis, a university arts methods professor, and Susan Seilstad, the new Montana Art Educators Association president.

The major adaptive challenge identified by the group was "Better communication throughout the state of Montana." Questionnaire results suggest that perspectives about

progress differ, with two retreat participants seeing increased informal communication among interested parties happening, while the third said that the "same communication patterns are in place." A winter work meeting of the MAEA board took place as planned. Landis observed that the "same folks were in attendance," and from her perspective only minor new ideas/projects were initiated. Regional centers for communication have not materialized, according to Landis. Conflicting reports about whether an event listed on the plan for January happened illustrate that communication remains a challenge. One person did not realize that the projected January teleconference between universities about art education issues had happened. Because it was planned before the Nebraska retreat, it was not a direct result of the retreat, said Landis. The final item on the plan was a "leadership retreat for art educators/advocates in our state." Even before the Nebraska retreat ended Seilstad had explored with the author the possibility of the same retreat being held in Montana in the spring. Through Seilstad's leadership the author was invited to present the "Leadership Without Easy Answers" retreat for Montana Arts and Language Arts Educators April 4-6, at the 320 Guest Ranch near Big Sky. Joining the Montana Art Educators Association in sponsorship was a broad-based coalition including the Montana Office of Public Instruction, the Montana Association for Teachers of English Language Arts, the Creative Pulse of the University of Montana, the Montana Arts Council, and the Montana Alliance for Arts Education.

Reflecting on the over-all impact of the Nebraska retreat, Davis said that "the retreat helped me to recognize and name those leadership characteristics I have developed over the years. . . . The retreat helped to identify more clearly and concretely various perspectives that groups operate from." Additionally, Davis came up with a diagram of the interrelationship of the arts in Montana, the arts' advocacy groups, and the community institutions that have an interest in these advocacy groups. Accompanying the diagram of two interconnecting rings of circles with 'the Arts in Montana' in the center was this sentence, "How do arts' advocacy organizations such as these that exist, as well as

individuals committed to the arts, work together to become more effective in promoting the arts in our state so that we as a community are enriched by a better understanding, appreciation, and experience of the arts?" Following that sentence, she wrote, "I'm struck with the thought that what I learned from the leadership retreat was that often we lead only with a question in hand." That sentence echoes the last sentence in Heifetz's book.

Landis also commented on the over-all impact of the retreat, writing,

> The biggest benefit has been a personal one. The theories from the readings and the conference work have allowed me to study the groups (university, community, and state) which I am a part of to discern leadership patterns. I openly discuss leadership roles more pragmatically now in these group settings. In my university classroom, leadership patterns continue to be broadened from an already-in-place base/foundation of students and professor planning together. We actually discuss leadership roles as pertaining to the teacher of art with connections to various theory bases. I continue to play an 'instigator' role by asking leading and often times 'troublesome' questions in a variety of situations! Now it's done with a bit more confidence as I'm more sure of implicit and explicit factors within decision-making and action. My share of the background work to implement new ideas and programs has not been increased but it has been sharpened and more focused.

Speaking from her leadership role as president of MAEA, Seilstad was positive in comments about the extent to which the group's plan from the Nebraska retreat had been implemented as well as in her comments on the overall impact of both of the retreats. "It's all happened," she said. She explained that MAEA at a recent board meeting had for the first time in fourteen years created a mission statement and goals for the organization. Seilstad said, however, that it is proving difficult to recultivate the enthusiasm of those who have been involved for the past 15 to 20 years, are nearer retirement, and are experiencing burn-out. Her hope is that those who have given so much will continue to mentor those coming down the road, that the vision re-established will lay a foundation, and that the

whole enterprise will continue taking small steps in a positive direction. Commenting specifically on the Montana retreat, Seilstad said that she is continuing to receive thank you's from the people who were there and notes that they have taken the ideas back to their associations. They are continuing to be in contact with one another. Expecting that enhanced communication throughout the state will be a continuing legacy of the Montana retreat, she concluded, "We took the common theme of leadership, wove in the arts, and gave the opportunity for people to network. This has been a big benefit."

Nebraska. To report all that is happening in Nebraska would require a second paper. Responses to the Follow-Up Questionnaire were received from 13 of the 16 Nebraska participants. At the retreat the group from Nebraska divided into three special focus groups for purposes of planning: Technology, Administration, and School Issues.

The Technology group identified as the major adaptive challenge "How can we reduce the gap between what teachers know and what students know about technology?" Questionnaire feedback was received in writing from one, and gathered by phone from two of the five persons. Katey Brown, Joslyn Art Museum's Curator of Education, has implemented almost all of the planned activities to make technology an internal supportive aid for the interpretation of works of art. A website home page is operational. The site can receive e-mail but is not yet interactive. Teachers are giving them feedback on the site, but visitors to the site are not yet being counted. Classroom teacher Linda Weinert found usable references about technology and learned from them herself. Opportunities for making presentations to students and parents were limited, but she did involve parents in one meeting which "was an impressive occasion," she said. An anticipated in-service for teachers was not held. Gary Day, artist and University of Nebraska-Omaha professor, reported a series of curriculum changes, success with a grant to create computer labs, and inclusion of the arts in a two million dollar project involving working with other UN-O colleges to develop simulation or virtual reality materials. That these resources became available he linked directly to having raised the profile of technology and the arts.

University of Nebraska-Omaha held several exhibitions emphasizing technology, but they are still in the initial stages of work with distance learning.

Commenting on the over-all impact of the retreat, Brown said she had never been to anything like the retreat before and that it was eye-opening. She enjoyed the different perspectives on leadership and liked meeting persons from other states and disciplines. She liked how the theory was presented. Being involved in mini-presentations helped her absorb the information. Brown says she remembers and uses ideas from the retreat on a day to day basis at the museum. She really benefited, particularly in terms of learning to work with a new boss. Weinert explained that she had shared the Heifetz book with a few staff members, and "encouraged my principal to evaluate the book's message for building in-services, especially for those staff members involved in leadership on committees and curriculum presentations. Day said the retreat had been useful in helping to figure out how to accomplish what they had done at University of Nebraska-Omaha.

The Administration group's major adaptive challenge was to sponsor several conferences for administrators, students, and community members at museums to provide meaningful art appreciation experiences for students in the presence of administrators and parents. These experiences would be designed to strengthen administrators' understanding of the value of art education for K-12 students. Questionnaire feedback was received in writing from one, and gathered by phone from three of the group's five participants. Two events were held. Karen Janovy, Curator of Education for Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery and Sculpture Garden, reported that about 25% of the Prairie Visions schools in Region 2 attended the conference held at the museum in February. While administrators, teachers, and parents met in a special session, the students went into the galleries to work with art objects under the guidance of DBAE educators. Those students then provided a tour for the adults. She writes, "A lovely sit-down dinner for all followed in the Sheldon Great Hall. It was a highly successful evening for those attending." A similar event at the Joslyn was attended by almost 200 people, including principals, teachers, students, and even a

few superintendents. Originally conceived as a recommitment event, Dr. Sheila Brown commented that "the shape of the idea changed as we worked with it," so that attending schools were not asked at the time to recommit to Prairie Visions. Mark Hoeger, Omaha Theater Company for Children, commented on the collaboration that is occurring with Prairie Visions. During the 1997 Prairie Visions Institute and in conjunction with it, they will have their own two week performing arts institute sponsored by the Cooper Foundation. During Week One participants will be involved in Prairie Visions activities for 90 minutes per day. Week Two will be devoted to curriculum development. There will be 10 participants this first year, with three faculty. Dr. Joanne Sowell, art historian from University of Nebraska-Omaha, participated in group discussions Saturday afternoon but was not present for Sunday morning's planning. Betty Nelson, Grand Island principal and one of Prairie Visions' original leaders, was also a member of the Technology group but is currently recovering from serious car accident injuries.

Finally, the group of persons focused on School Issues each identified adaptive challenges in their own particular school situations. Questionnaire responses were received from all six members of this group, two in writing and four by phone. Implementation results can be summarized as "varied," and range from simply more consciously verbally articulating the value of the arts whenever possible to impressive work with grants and curriculum development. One person admitted that things put on the plan were things that were going to be done anyway, so that the model was not really tested. Gail Dickel, an art teacher at a private school, expressed frustration with how the limited time available to a teacher in her experience clearly limits the ability to reflect or do much. For her, therefore, the major value of the retreat was the time to reflect, to become more clear about values and goals. She'd like a follow-up meeting to talk about where we've been and refocus on leadership periodically since for her understanding something and carrying it out are two different things. Arlen Meyer, Seward High School Art teacher, said he'd never thought about leadership in any of those ways. "What I got was new awareness of how people do

arrive at decisions. It does influence me as I approach decision-making situations." Carole DeBuse, Omaha South High School Art teacher and one of the original co-directors of Prairie Visions, was also philosophical, saying the retreat "helped her get a clearer idea of different facets of leadership, all the parts that have to come into play if you are truly going to lead and follow through." Jan Jones wrote about the over-all impact of the retreat in these words, "I returned with an enthusiasm that was dedicated to sharing materials and having a meeting with three of my four principals and the district vice-superintendent. They were responsive and supportive. The other benefits have been more subtle, but considering the success of the year, must be positively becoming part of my professional thinking and style." Finally, Lexington Principal Marcia Bader summarized the impact of the retreat with two words, "Astoundingly positive." She continued, "I knew when our whole group met at Mahoney something different was occurring. Never before have I been able to focus specifically on necessary innovations that would be helpful when I arrived home. So many time I have referred to what we had talked about."

## Part Three - Summary, Reflections and Implications

The opening paragraph of this paper includes the facilitator/author's definition of leading: *Leading happens within communities when the meaning of our common enterprise emerges with greater clarity and when persons are stimulated and encouraged by each other to grow toward greater wholeness.* From that understanding of leading has emerged the author's approach to leadership development, and the title of this monograph: "Leadership Development: A Meaning-Making Art." Both the activities and the underlying design of the "Leadership Without Easy Answers" retreat have been described. The relaxed caring atmosphere and the spiral design of the retreat's content were about involving participants in constructing meaning. Evidence that the participants' cognitive understandings of leadership were affected by the retreat experience has been presented through description and analysis of the leadership definitions written at the beginning and the end of the retreat. Every person's definition was changed in some way. Definitions

with journey and community metaphors increased in number, while definitions that were primarily focused on dominance with influence decreased in number.

Questionnaire responses suggest that the theoretical presentations having the most long-term usefulness to the participants were the reframing perspectives of Bolman and Deal (1991) and Heifetz's (1994) definition of leadership as mobilizing persons to do adaptive work. That almost all participants report some implementation of retreat plans has been presented in some detail. Whether any of the implementation is directly related to the retreat experience can not be established conclusively. Certainly some of the plans recorded at the retreat were in existence before the retreat and would have been completed anyway. Comments do suggest that perhaps the retreat for some persons did increase their competence so that implementation of the plans was accomplished with more ease and excellence. Finally, almost all participants responded that they had experienced an over-all positive impact from the retreat experience.

## Reflections

Reflecting on similarities and differences among the three states, the "Leadership Without Easy Answers" retreat appears to have helped Colorado continue in the direction it was already going. Coming into the retreat in November, Colorado was further along than Wyoming and Montana. Realistically, much of what has happened in Colorado since the retreat would undoubtedly have happened without the retreat experience. Perhaps, however, things have happened more easily because three key leaders had the opportunity to spend three days in a retreat setting focused on their important project. In Wyoming, the plan to hold some type of Prairie Visions style institute is happening on schedule in the form of a one credit course to be held in August, with some energy from the retreat undoubtedly contributing to that outcome. For Montana, a new idea emerged at the retreat, that is, to have a similar retreat experience as a format for bringing together people from the diverse groups of the Montana arts' advocacy organizations. Determination and creative funding made the idea a reality in April. Whether the result of that retreat will be enhanced

communication among these groups will become more clear as time passes. It is too soon to see results. Further reflecting on the differences among the states, the usefulness of the theoretical information was ranked highest (3.63) by Montana, the state where the structure of the arts coalition is still in the process of emerging. Means of all the rankings for the other states are: Colorado, 2.96, Wyoming, 3.21, and Nebraska, 3.05.

## Implications

Based on comments about the over-all impact of the retreat, in terms of this kind of a setting and format for leadership training for arts advocates, several generalizations are offered. A weekend retreat in an attractive setting facilitates focus and provides an ideal format for leadership development work with arts' advocates. There is value to being away from one's routine and free from distractions. The retreat was designed to model the theory, giving persons an experience of one approach to leadership while at the same time honoring who they were and what they believed. Bringing together persons from the four states created the energy of diversity. As relationships were built and information exchanged, perspectives on leadership were enhanced one converation and one activity at a time. Whereas some leadership development for arts' advocates is linked to other kinds of professional development, this retreat allowed a focus just on leadership as it relates to arts issues. Several commented on the value of an experience where there was separation of leadership content and process from art content and process.

The scenario writing activity gave participants a way to vent their frustrations with complex situations. Having externalized the problems and issues, it was easier to approach solutions through reframing. Particularly it was helpful to give the scenario to another group and hear how others would solve a problem. Because artists and art educators are used to looking from a variety of perspectives, this popular educational administration theory from the work of organizational theorists Bolman and Deal seems a natural to be included in leadership development with arts' advocates. It is particularly valuable to hear

how someone else looks at your situation if one lives in a sparsely populated state where isolation and communication are major challenges.

The retreat outcomes demonstrate the value of collaboration and networking. The retreat experience helped these state leaders, even those with much experience, move from the "circle of confusion" to sharpen and focus their ideas about leadership. In the eloquent words of Mark Hoeger, "Leading is being a lens that focuses the scattered energy of light into a discernible image." Dr. Connie Landis's final leadership definition, composed of words and images, fully captures the energy of "Leadership Without Easy Answers" and its participants' multiple perspectives on leadership: the questions, the diversity, the differing paths, the collaboration, the journey, the ever emerging meaning as we "lead together to whereever!"

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Appendix

1. Participant List
2. Leadership Definitions - Conversation Activity Quotations
3. Visionville Scenario
4. Thinking About Change - Conversation Activity Quotations
5. Follow-Up Questionnaire Cover Letter
6. Follow-Up Questionnaire

# "LEADERSHIP WITHOUT EASY ANSWERS"

November 15-17, 1996
Mahoney State Park, Nebraska

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Jacquie Kitzelman
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# "Leadership Without Easy Answers"

**A Retreat for the National Center for Leadership and Collaborative Practice in DBAE**

Linda L. Lyman, Ph.D.
Bradley University

## SESSION 1 - Leadership: A Conversation

**"A good conversation is exhilarating: thoughts and ideas are played off against one another. The conversation is neither a fight nor a contest: it is circular or spiral in form, cooperative in manner, and constructive in intent. It is an interchange of ideas by those who see themselves not as adversaries, but as human beings coming together to talk and listen and learn from one another."**

1. "Essentially, it might be said there is but one archetypal mythic hero whose life has been replicated in many lands by many, many people. A legendary hero is usually the founder of something -- the founder of a new age, the founder of a new religion, the founder of a new city, the founder of a new way of life. In order to found something new, one has to leave the old and go in quest of the seed idea, a germinal idea that will have the potentiality of bringing forth that new thing."

The Power of Myth, Joseph Campbell, 1988

2. "Our traditional views of leaders -- as special people who set the direction, make the key decisions, and energize the troops -- are deeply rooted in an individualistic and nonsystemic world view. Especially in the West, leaders are heroes -- great men (and occasionally women) who 'rise to the fore' in times of crises. Our prevailing leadership myths are still captured by the image of the captain of the cavalry leading the charge to rescue the settlers from the attacking Indians. . . . The new view of leadership in learning organizations centers on subtler and more important tasks. In a learning organization, leaders are designers, stewards, and teachers."

The Fifth Discipline, Peter M. Senge, 1990

3. "We are suggesting that there is a way of understanding leadership that has the potential for sorting out all the others and getting us past our confusion without giving up richness: Leadership as meaning-making or sense-making. Whenever people are doing something together for any period of time extended enough to form a community, we can usefully think of the striving to make things make sense, to create meaning out of that experience, as the process of leadership -- however that process plays out and with whatever participation by various individuals."

Making Common Sense, Wilfred H. Drath and Charles J. Palus, 1994

4. "These ideas speak with a simple clarity to issues of effective leadership. They bring us back to the importance of simple governing principles: guiding visions, strong values, organizational beliefs -- the few rules individuals can use to shape their own behavior. The leader's task is to communicate them, to keep them ever-present and clear, and then allow individuals in the system their random, sometimes chaotic-looking meanderings. . . . What leaders are called upon to do in a chaotic world is to shape their organizations through concepts, not through elaborate rules or structures."

Leadership and the New Science, Margaret J. Wheatley, 1992

5. "Rather than define leadership either as a position of authority in a social structure or as a personal set of characteristics, we may find it a great deal more useful to define leadership as an *activity*. This allows for leadership from multiple positions in a social structure. . . . This study examines the usefulness of viewing leadership in terms of adaptive work. Adaptive work consists of the learning required to address conflicts in the values people hold, or to diminish the gap between the values people stand for and the reality they face. Adaptive work requires a change in values, beliefs, or behavior. The exposure and orchestration of conflict -- internal contradictions -- within individuals and constituencies provide the leverage for mobilizing people to learn new ways."

Leadership Without Easy Answers, Ronald A. Heifetz, 1994

6. "Leading is giving. Leadership is an ethic, a gift of oneself. It is easy to miss the depth and power of this message. The essence of leadership is not giving things or even providing visions. It is offering oneself and one's spirit."

Leading With Soul, Lee G. Bolman and Terrence E. Deal, 1995

## NEW IMAGES OF LEADERSHIP

*"Our constructs of leadership, it seems, have been built around what is perhaps, ultimately, an epiphenomenon -- the powerful individual taking charge. This aspect of leadership is like the whitecaps on the sea -- prominent and captivating, flashing in the sun. But to think about the sea solely in terms of the top of the waves is to miss the far vaster and more profound phenomenon out of which such waves arise -- it is to focus attention on the tops and miss the sea beneath. And so leadership may be much more than the dramatic whitecaps of the individual leader, and may be more productively understood as the deep blue water we all swim in when we work together."*

Making Common Sense,
Drath & Palus, 1994

## A MESSY SCENARIO

**WHERE:** The setting is the midwestern town of Visionville where Bill Howe, a member of the town council, wanted to create a local arts council that would oversee the cultural activities in the community. This town of 5000 people is the largest in the far western end of the state. It's a high plains desert, full of sage and tumbleweed, where it rains fifteen inches in a good year. It's a place where Native Americans and whites live in the same community, but apart. It's the kind of small town where honest differences and disagreements pose such a threat that they are quickly submerged, left to fester in a complex web of resentments.

**WHEN:** In the mid 1990s, this was the situation.

**WHO:** Officials of the town government appointed a committee to look into how best to proceed with creating an arts council. Members of the committee included Susan Johnson, an attorney interested in the arts, Samuel Brown, a local artist, Bernice Smith, an elderly piano teacher, Frank Earnest, the choir director at Hope Church, Helen Jones, an enthusiastic elementary teacher who liked crafts, and the local county historical museum director, Brian Bentwood. The high school art teacher in the community, Sue White was suspicious of the project from the beginning because the committee was chaired by Brown, an eccentric local artist who generally dismissed art teachers as "second class" artists. No one from the half-century old drama club had been included on the planning committee, nor had anyone from the Native American community.

**WHAT:** The group held three public meetings to determine what structure and kinds of activities would be most appropriate, but these were poorly attended so town officials just appointed the committee members to the newly created Visionville Arts Council board, supplied a small budget, and asked that programming begin immediately. Brown wanted the committee to coordinate an areawide arts calendar, develop a directory of local and regional arts groups and artists, and schedule events for all the performing and visual arts spaces. He was not interested in programming for young people. Smith was only interested in musical events. Meetings were disorganized and there was continuing conflict between Jones, the one teacher on the council, and Brown, who had been given a small honorarium to be Arts Council coordinator. Johnson wanted the group to try for grant funding to support programs and to enhance the activities of the local museum. She took responsibility for the first grant, which failed because the proposed programs would "serve only an elitist and affluent audience," said the director of the funding agency, claiming that her agency might feel differently if the museum offered subsidized admissions for senior citizens, attempted to make the facility accessible to the handicapped, offered an educational program for local school children, and included events to appeal to the Native American population. After nine months the Visionville Arts Council has accomplished very little, and several city council members are beginning to question the wisdom of continued city funding.

**GROUPWORK:**

1. What problems do you see:
   - A. From the Structural perspective?
   - B. From the Human Resource perspective?
   - C. From the Political perspective?
   - D. From the Cultural perspective?
2. Working from each of these perspectives, what leadership responses are suggested?

# "Leadership Without Easy Answers"

**A Retreat for the National Center for Leadership and Collaborative Practice in DBAE**

Linda L. Lyman, Ph.D.
Bradley University

## A Conversation about Change

1. "Four issues are salient in collective reactions to change:
    1. Change causes people to feel incompetent, needy, and powerless.
    2. Change creates confusion and unpredictability throughout an organization.
    3. Change generates conflict.
    4. Change creates loss.

. . . Unless each issue is matched with an appropriate response, the intended change will fail -- or backfire. Failure to consider one or more of these issues is a chief cause of our inability to change organizations."

-- Lee G. Bolman & Terrence E. Deal, Reframing Organizations, 1991

2. "There are exciting, but no comfortable positions in contending with the forces of change because one must always fight against overcontrol on the one hand, and chaos on the other. There is a pattern underlying the eight lessons of dynamic change and it concerns one's ability to work with polar opposites: simultaneously pushing for change while allowing self-learning to unfold; being prepared for a journey of uncertainty; seeing problems as sources of creative resolution; having a vision, but not being blinded by it; valuing the individual and the group; incorporating centralizing and decentralizing forces; being internally cohesive, but externally oriented; and valuing personal change agentry as the route to system change."

-- Michael Fullan, Change Forces, 1993

3. "One of the most beautiful examples of a self-organizing chemical clock is the Belousov-Zhabotinsky reaction, where the chemicals, in response to changes in temperature and mix, form into swirling spiral patterns that rival the beauty of a Ukranian Easter egg. . . . The scrolls that emerge are similar to the scroll formations that appear in many other places, both in nature and in art. 'The spiral is one of nature's basic forms of design,' writes photographer Andreas Feininger. Some scientists have wondered if spiral forms in art describe a common, deep experience of change, change that leads to dissipation and then to a new ordering."

-- Margaret J. Wheatley, Leadership and the New Science, 1992

4. "Current reality is, for many of us, the enemy. We fight against what is. We are not so much drawn to what we want to create as we are repelled by what we have, from our current reality. By this logic, the deeper the fear, the more we abhor what is, the more 'motivated' we are to change. 'Things must get bad enough, or people will not change in any fundamental way.' This leads to the mistaken belief that fundamental change *requires* a threat to survival. This crisis theory of change is remarkably widespread. Yet, it is also a dangerous oversimplification."

--Peter M. Senge, The Fifth Discipline, 1990

5. "The problem of change is the problem of power, and the problem of power is how to wield it in ways that allow others to identify with, to gain a sense of ownership of, the process and goals of change. That is no easy task; it is a frustrating, patience-demanding, time-consuming process. Change cannot be carried out by the calendar, a brute fact that those with power often cannot confront."

-- Seymour B. Sarason, Revisiting 'The Culture of The School and The Problem of Change', 1996

6. "Leadership, as used here, means engaging people to make progress on the adaptive problems they face. Because making progress on adaptive problems requires learning, the task of leadership consists of choreographing and directing learning processes in an organization or community. Progress often demands new ideas and innovation. As well, it often demands changes in people's attitudes and behaviors. Adaptive work consists of the process of discovering and making those changes. Leadership, with or without authority, requires an educative strategy."

-- Ronald A. Heifetz, Leadership Without Easy Answers, 1994

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## HORSE STORY**

(Dr. Emory Cowen of the University of Rochester found the following in his mailbox. The author is unknown.)

Common advice from knowledgeable horse trainers includes the adage, "If the horse you're riding dies, get off." Seems simple enough, yet, in the education business we don't always follow that advice. Instead, we often choose from an array of alternatives which include:

1. Buying a stronger whip.
2. Trying a new bit or bridle.
3. Switching riders.
4. Moving the horse to a new location.
5. Riding the horse for longer periods of time.
6. Saying things like, "This is the way we've always ridden this horse."
7. Appointing a committee to study the horse.
8. Arranging to visit other sites where they ride dead horses efficiently.
9. Increasing the standards for riding dead horses.
10. Creating a test for measuring our riding ability
11. Comparing how we're riding now with how we did 10 or 20 years ago.
12. Complaining about the state of horses these days.
13. Coming up with new styles of riding.
14. Blaming the horse's parents. The problem is often in the breeding.
15. Tightening the cinch.

**Reproduced in Seymour B. Sarason, Revisiting "The Culture of The School and The Problem of Change", 1996

BRADLEY UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HEALTH SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP
AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

May 12, 1997

TO: Participants in the "Leadership Without Easy Answers" November Retreat

FROM: Linda Lyman, Retreat Facilitator

SUBJECT: Final Retreat Follow-Up

The time has come for me to begin writing the monograph that will include the following:

** A report on the conference, including your leadership definitions, scenarios, and plans for addressing the adaptive challenges identified
** Results of my follow-up communication with participants (this questionnaire!)
** Reflections on the implications of the conference for leadership development for arts advocates in Nebraska and other states

As promised in my December letter, I am writing to gather your feedback six months later on *"Leadership Without Easy Answers," A Retreat for the National Center for Leadership and Collaborative Practice in DBAE,* held at Mahoney State Park November 15-17, 1996. The accompanying questionnaire is designed to help me understand which of the theoretical materials have been most useful, to what extent the plans made during the retreat are being implemented, and to what extent the retreat as a whole has been helpful to you in terms of your leadership responsibilities. I am open to any other feedback you would care to share.

I have made the questionnaire as brief as possible and included a self-addressed stamped envelope for your reply. **I am hoping for your reply no later than June 1, since the monograph itself must be completed no later than June 31.** Thanks for all your help! You each will receive a copy of the completed monograph.



PEORIA, ILLINOIS / 61625 / 309-677-3193

# FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONNAIRE:

## "Leadership Without Easy Answers"

*A Retreat for the National Center for Leadership and Collaborative Practice in DBAE*

PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN BY JUNE 1.

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**PART I - USEFULNESS OF LEADERSHIP THEORY**

Please indicate to what extent the theoretical presentations made at the retreat have continued to be useful to you as you carry out your responsibilities for leadership in the arts. Using the following scale, write the appropriate number (4, 3, 2, or 1) in the space provided at the left of each of the A - G items.

Usefulness Rankings:

| | |
|---|---|
| Totally Useful = | 4 |
| Greatly Useful = | 3 |
| Somewhat Useful = | 2 |
| Not-at-all Useful = | 1 |

| RANKINGS | THEORETICAL PRESENTATIONS |
|---|---|
| _____ | A. "Leadership Definitions" Conversation Activity (Friday evening) |
| _____ | B. Video on Margaret Wheatley's "Leadership and the New Science" (Friday evening) |
| _____ | C. Four reframing perspectives of Bolman and Deal - structural, human resource, political, and ~~symbolic~~ (Sat. a.m.) |
| _____ | D. Heifetz's idea that leadership is about adaptive challenges that require changes in person's values, attitudes, or habits of behavior (Sat. p.m.) |
| _____ | E. Heifetz's ideas about work avoidance patterns (Sat. p.m.) |
| _____ | F. "Change Quotations" Conversation Activity (Sunday) |
| _____ | G. Caring Leadership Themes (Sunday) |
| _____ | H. Reading Ronald A. Heifetz's Leadership Without Easy Answers |

COMMENTS:

## PART II - IMPLEMENTATION OF PLANNING

You were involved in a group that identified one major adaptive challenge as a priority and developed plans for addressing that challenge. Please refer to the summary of the work of your group that is attached.

SPECIFIC COMMENTS:

Please write comments directly on the attached summary to indicate what has/is happening. Indicate which of the plans have progressed and how far. Return the summary with this questionnaire.

GENERAL COMMENTS: (This space is for any additional general comments you care to make about implementation of retreat planning.)

## PART III - OVER-ALL IMPACT OF THE RETREAT

Please comment on to what extent the retreat as a whole has continued to be helpful to you in understanding and carrying out your responsibilities for leadership in the arts.

COMMENTS:



NAME _____ DATE _____

**THANKS FOR YOUR HELP!**

***PLEASE RETURN THE SUMMARY AND QUESTIONNAIRE BY JUNE 1 IN THE ENCLOSED ENVELOPE!***